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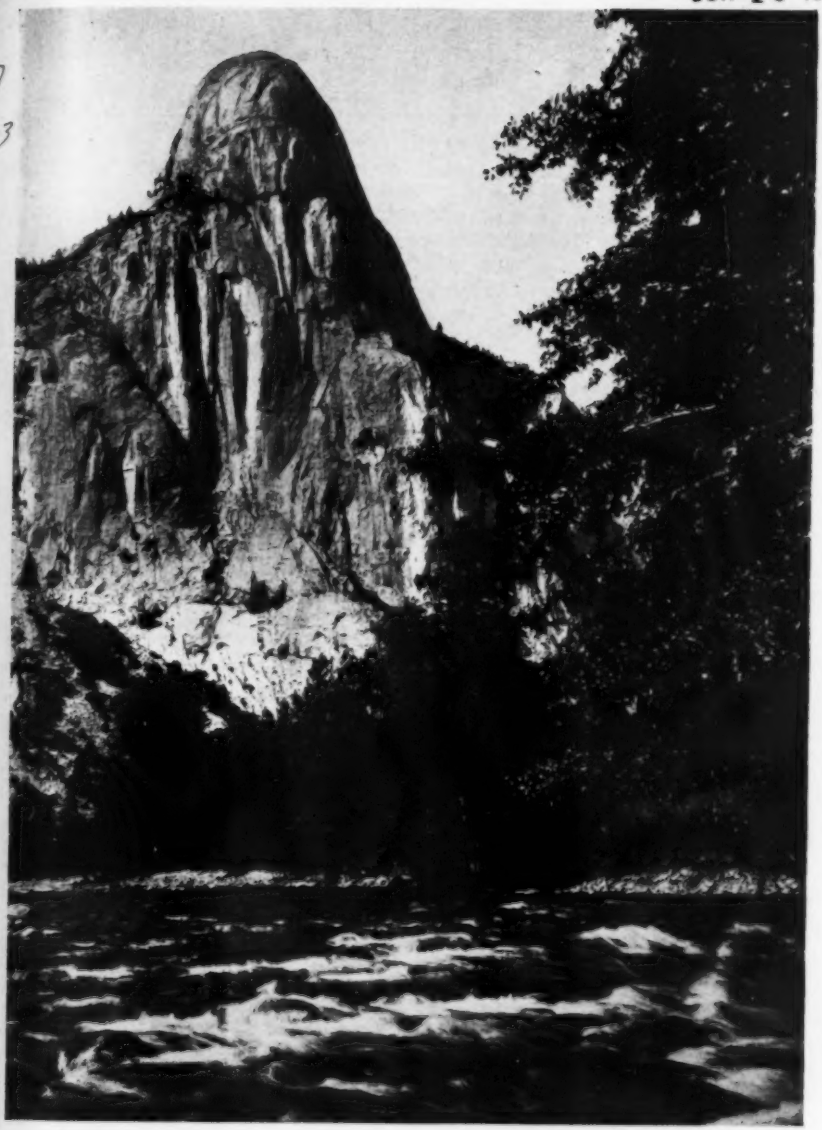

SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN

May 1948

UNIV. OF MICH.

Miscellany

St. Helena, Calif.
April 10, 1948

Editor—You must have received scores of congratulations on the March *Bulletin*. I am going to comment later on "Are Mules Necessary?" which is provocative of useful thought on the use of the mountain meadows and grazing. Just now I want you to know and to let Hans Huth know that "Yosemite: The Story of an Idea" confounds me by its erudition and makes me falter when I think of the falsities which I advanced at many a campfire when I preached the heresy of Hedges' burst of inspiration under National Park Mountain in the Yellowstone.

Hans Huth has traced the national park idea back to its first fountains and deserves the thanks of all of us who have worked in or studied our national parks. . . .

JACK WHITE

• To Colonel John R. White, former superintendent of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, our thanks—and our hope that we can count on his help in the threat to those parks that is sketched briefly in these pages. The latest page in the story of that threat comes from an article in the *Berkley Daily Gazette*, May 27, 1948:

KINGS RIVER HYDROELECTRIC HEARING ENDS

FRESNO, May 27 (U.P.)—A Federal Power Commission hearing in Fresno on applications to develop the hydroelectric resources of the Kings River ended late yesterday.

Counsel for the Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and the Kings River irrigation units have until August 24 to file final briefs to the commission in Washington, D.C. The commission also will receive the recommendation of the examiner, Maximillian Baron, and after studying the records the hearing will make their decision on which applicants "would best serve the public's interest."

For eight days the PG&E and the irrigation units presented evidence on why they should be granted permission to develop the river's potentialities. Two other parties, a Los Angeles private engineer and the city of Los Angeles, withdrew from the hearing to prepare amendments to their applications.

The PG&E is seeking a license to begin construction of power houses and dams on the north fork of the river in almost identical locations which the irrigation district wants to survey for possible development.

The Bureau of Reclamation is contesting both applicants. However, it must receive Congressional approval, not that of the FPC, for its go-ahead on construction.

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DAVID R. BROWER, *Chairman of the Editorial Board and Editor of the Sierra Club Bulletin*
Harriet Parsons, *Associate Editor;* Ansel Adams, John Barnard, Barbara Bedayn, Arthur Blake, Irene Charnock, Joan Clark, August Frugé, Morgan Harris, Weldon Heald, François Matthes, Charlotte E. Mauk, Marion R. Parsons, Vivian Schagen, Blanche Stallings, Dorothy Thompson.

Sierra Club Bulletin

VOLUME 33 MAY, 1948 NUMBER 5

. . . TO EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE NATURAL MOUNTAIN SCENE . . .

For the May Record

Dawn of a Crisis?

Those who happened to be listening to the news broadcasts on the evening of May 5 were in on the beginning of what may be the most serious conservation battle since Hetch Hetchy went under.

It was just a short item—something about the revival by the city of Los Angeles of old power filings on the Kings River. But it was enough to catch the conservationist's ear and make him wonder.

The short news item in the next morning's paper, however, was enough to alarm him: Six hydroelectric power plants on the river. Total capacity, 250,000 kilowatts. Cost, $100,000,000. Construction to begin in 1951.

Although it was first thought the news story might be a garbled account of PG&E plans for the North Fork of the Kings, a stream on which power development is not opposed by the club, a detailed check with local authorities soon made all too clear the seriousness of the news.

1) Each of the following scenic areas on the Middle and South forks of the Kings would be inundated by lakes more than two miles long: Tehipite Valley, Cedar Grove, Copper Creek, Simpson Meadow, and Paradise Valley. All these sites for dams are either in Kings Canyon National Park or are required for its recreational development.

2) The two forks and a portion of the Kings below their junction would be diverted through 44.5 miles of covered conduits, tunnels, and penstocks.

3) Power houses would be built in Tehipite and at Copper Creek and Cedar Grove, in terrain of national-park caliber, as well as lower down on the river.

4) High-voltage transmission lines would be constructed over the Sierra Crest to connect these plants with the Owens Valley lines to be completed.

5) The Los Angeles Bureau of Power and Light believes that this use of the Kings River should not concern San Joaquin Valley people, whose water needs would be amply taken care of by the Pine Flat Dam now under construction by the Army Engineers at a low elevation on the river.

6) *The fact that some of the sites now enjoy national-park protection should not encourage complacency, whether among lay conservationists, among the guardians of the parks and forests, or among local persons who feel that any water and power from the west slope of the Sierra should be used closer to home. Hetch Hetchy shows what can happen in a national park. And Los Angeles has shown, on the Owens River and the Colorado, that when it wants water and power it can get water and power, regardless of the opposition of Owens Valley farmers, Mono Lake property owners, the states of Colorado and Arizona, or the Republic of Mexico.*

The Sierra Club is watching developments closely and actively and is preparing to enlist the aid of its members throughout the country, of other organizations, of the government, and of the public at large. All may be called on soon with whatever resources are at the club's command. Further details will follow in subsequent issues of the *Bulletin*. The battle

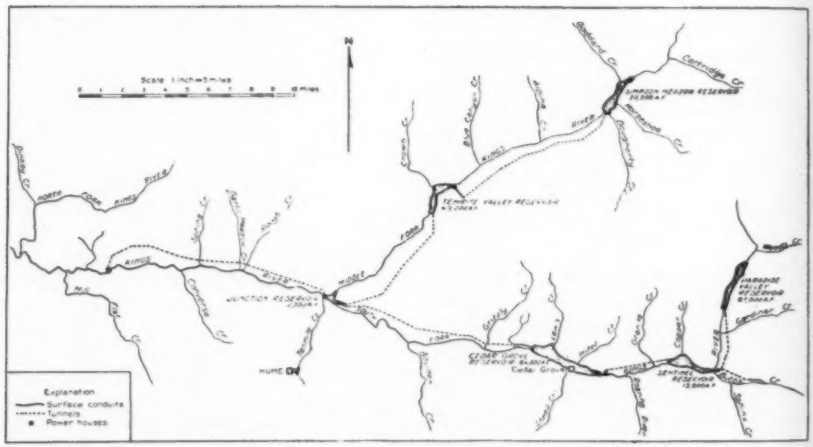
may be doubly difficult because the recent power and water shortage may have conditioned many Californians to feel that all the state's potential power and water must be developed now, whether or not it is in or near a national park.

We know that this time has not yet come. We may seriously question whether we want it ever to come—whether we must keep boosting and boosting, urging the population curve ever to surge upward, until at last the vestigial beauty of the West is trampled by those who love it.

The problem has its economic and political as well as its philosophical ramifications. It involves the battle of public versus private power, power versus irrigation, conservation versus exploitation. Long-range consideration must be given to the life expectancy of dams, to the possibilities of developing atomic power which might be used in part to distill seawater for coastal desert cities; for whatever we do to our national parks will certainly be long-range destruction. There is no need to labor the point that the dams, tunnels, transmission lines, and construction roads will have an impact that will bring an end to the Kings River High Sierra as we know it.

It is easy to make an inventory of evils. It is difficult to plan a course of protective action that will be effective. What is needed now is an alert membership that will be active in making pertinent observations and recommendations, and that will enlist the interest of persons outside the organization so that they will be ready to help when the right time comes.

D.R.B.



MAP OF MODIFIED LOS ANGELES PROJECT

(From *Report to the Federal Power Commission on the Storage Resources of the South and Middle Forks of Kings River, California, June 5, 1930*, by Ralph R. Randell, Senior Engineer, Federal Power Commission. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1931, p. 44.) Adequate information about the power resources of the lower sites on the Kings River—those which would not encroach upon the scenic values of Kings Canyon National Park—are not available. A detailed survey is forthcoming.

A Last Chance at Butano

The fact San Mateo County officials found it necessary to rouse a judge from his bed at night to get court action to halt logging in Pioneer Grove is eloquence sufficient.

Those people are fighting to preserve a heritage that is left to no other people on the face of the earth—and they need help!

Why should we and every individual and organization in California be interested in that fight?

The last remaining large stand of virgin redwoods south of Humboldt County, more than 200 miles to the north, is the Butano.

The last chance for the more than 3,000,000 people of the Bay Area to save for themselves and those yet to come a great primitive forest, is the Butano.

Once gone it can never, in the eons that follow, be replaced.

The "stay of execution" granted by the San Mateo court, and the later agreement of the lumber company to withhold operations for 60 days, applies only to a small area, the 80-acre Pioneer Grove. Into that grove the loggers moved suddenly and destructively last week, 10 days after they had received and acknowledged notice the County wanted to buy the grove.

The intent is apparent. So is the public responsibility.

The present court injunction and agreement does not apply to more than 4,000 acres of the Butano Forest desired and essential for a State Park. The 2,000, 3,000 and 4,000-year old trees on those acres belong to the lumber interests. It is their legal right to cut them down for the profit they bring. It is their business to destroy them as trees and convert them into lumber.

It is the business of the public to preserve them as living trees for the enjoyment and spiritual inspiration of millions.

For 30 years and more individuals and small groups have tried to save these trees. More than 30 years ago the public was warned—at a time when there were no large logging operations going on—that the trees would eventually be cut unless they became State or County property.

Time has definitely run out on that warning.

The trees are now being cut in great and increasing numbers. In just a few years this entire area will look like an unreclaimable waste, instead of an incomparable heritage of the ages.

In the words of a member of Butano Forest Associates: "There is only a handful of us now working night after night, week ends, and every free moment. Gradually we are enlarging our circle to join the battle. It is not one man's work. It is for each one of us to shoulder even a little part. If one had ever stood in the cathedral-like silence of the Butano, to him or her would come the same determination that filled my heart in the tree-sifted light of this age-old forest. When I awake in the night always before me is the vision of their quiet, graceful majesty—waiting, waiting."

In the name of man's reverence for the God that made these trees and preserved them, the oldest living things on earth, let us now do our part to keep this trust.

BUTANO FOREST AND VICINITY

Butano Forest: What Do We Have and What Must We Do?

Butano Forest, comprising about 5,000 acres of primeval redwood forest adjacent to Big Basin, is the only major stand of virgin Sequoia sempervirens south of Humboldt County. It was purchased in August 1945 by The Pacific Lumber Company and is now in immediate danger of being logged off. To prevent this irreparable loss, decisive action must be taken. Funds must be accumulated to acquire Butano Forest as a state park.

In the spring of 1946, Frederick Law Olmsted, an honorary vice-president of the club, and an outstanding park planner, was engaged by the State Park Commission to evaluate the recreational possibilities of Butano Forest as a potential state park. As Mr. Olmsted had made a complete survey of all of California's state parks in 1928, he was highly qualified to make a comparative study of Butano Forest's recreational value. Following are quotations from his report:

"There is no doubt whatever that this is scenically the best as well as the largest body of primeval forest remaining in this part of the state . . .

"One of the most remarkable things about this district is that large tracts of virgin redwood forest should have survived uncut for so many years just here, less than 50 miles from the midst of the enormously expanding population of the San Francisco Bay urban aggregation, and close to the starting place from which wholesale commercial logging of redwoods spread so widely and so fast.

"That the first State redwood park was established here, at Big Basin, was no accident. It was due not only to the impressive quality of the forest there but also to its nearness to that great population. For similar reasons, the State-wide park survey of 1928, recognizing the progressively growing need for nearby forest parks . . . recommended adding 12,000 acres to Big Basin Park [which would have included Butano Forest] . . .

Butano Forest: The Statistics

Location	• 50 miles from San Francisco via Skyline Boulevard, 1 mile northwest of Big Basin State Park, 1½ miles south of San Mateo County Memorial Park, 3 miles west of Portola Redwood State Park, embracing the watershed of Butano Creek.
Area	• Approximately 5,000 acres.
Terrain	• Numerous small waterfalls; gently sloping flats between the north fork and the low saddle of the central ridge, remaining area steep and rugged.
Forest Cover	• A paradise of luxurious ferns, tiger lilies and wild iris. Three to four square miles of azaleas and rhododendrons under giant redwoods 2,000 years old.
Proposed Use	• Flat areas suitable for development of picnicking and camping facilities, the steeper terrain for "wilderness" use by trails of moderate length from ridge roads and from the future State Bridle and Hiking Trail.
Access	• Now via China Grade from Big Basin. County fire road into area from Pescadero can be improved for public use at moderate cost.

"Since 1932 renewed logging and forest fires have made large inroads on the forests of the district. Logging is now extending rapidly, and the last large tracts of virgin forest yet remaining untouched in this district, still of great potential park value even though now isolated from each other by great areas of deforestation, are due to go the same way in the very near future unless promptly consolidated in public ownership.

"Comparatively large and recreationally valuable virgin redwood forests elsewhere cannot be reached from the metropolitan region of San Francisco Bay short of a long day's travel to Humboldt County or beyond. And the time has now come when a final decision must be made whether or not, for the vast population of the Bay Region in centuries to come, access to virgin redwood forests within an easy afternoon's round trip drive is to be forever confined to the already overcrowded Big Basin Park and Muir Woods, and the few fragmentary remnants that have thus far been preserved for the public elsewhere within that radius.

"If they are ever to have more, it will only be by prompt action in this district and at high monetary cost."

Butano Forest is the hub around which present state and county redwood parks and youth camps are located. Public ownership of Butano Forest is imperative, not only to protect its superlative stand of redwoods from loggers' saws, but to provide the only possible expansion of recreation facilities to alleviate overuse of the area's present public parks.

The immediate tributary area within a 100-mile radius of these redwood parks contains approximately two million people—one-fifth of California's population. In addition to vacationists from this region, many are drawn from southern California and San Joaquin Valley, just one day's trip away. Last year Big Basin alone had over half a million visitors, ranking next to Yosemite in attendance. With California's population increasing at the rate of 1,300 people per day, each season will see our park areas more and more congested.

Our redwood forests with their shallow root systems cannot long survive such trampling as Big Basin received last year. Restrictive use of available forests as well as rotation of camping areas will be necessary unless additional park lands are provided for the constantly increasing number of persons who seek to use them. We must act at once to acquire Butano Forest, our last stand of virgin redwoods.

Extensive logging has already begun along the margins of the Butano Forest. Once connected with surrounding public and quasi-public areas by a continuous growth of primeval forest, it now stands isolated. The near-by redwood strip along Pescadero Creek, long recommended for public ownership, has now been decimated by the Santa Cruz Lumber Company, in whose possession it was allowed to remain. Timely action by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors halted operations on the outskirts of superb Pioneer Grove. Only immediate action can save Butano Forest from similar destruction.

What You Can Do

Butano Forest was purchased by the Pacific Lumber Company for $511,000; it is now valued at considerably more. It is hoped the property may be acquired for a state park for a sum to be determined either through negotiation with the company or by decision of a suit of eminent domain. The State Park Commission has allocated a maximum of $600,000 toward the purchase of the Butano, provided money or property is contributed by private individuals or by communities dollar for dollar to match state funds.

San Mateo County has agreed to deed its County Memorial Park, valued at $305,000, to the state toward the purchase price of the Butano Forest. Much more in community contributions from Bay Region city and county funds is required to effect this program, as well as contributions from individuals and groups.

You can help by urging communities and groups to contribute as well as sending in your own donation toward Butano Forest to the Sierra Club. Each dollar you give is worth two. There's not much time.

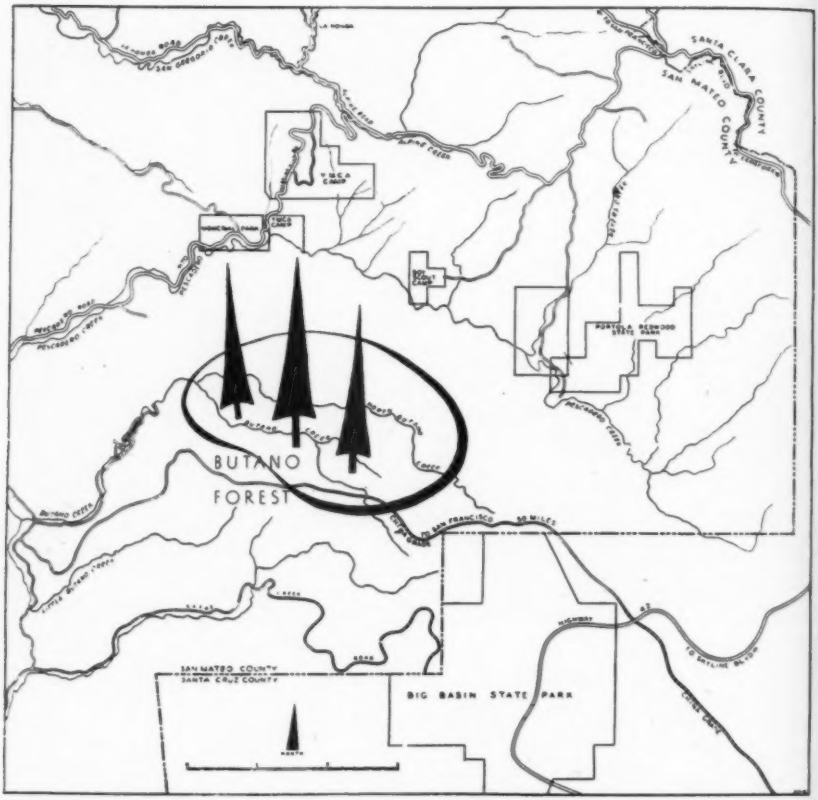
Which Shall It Be?

On facing pages you see two versions of what we can have at Butano. We've seen many such before-and-after photographs, but it doesn't hurt to be reminded of one of the costs of lumber.

There is a substitute, elsewhere in the state, for the lumber resources in Butano. There is no substitute, anywhere, for the peculiar and extraordinary scenic and recreational value of this forest.

Butano Forest Associates envisions continuing as an active organization in promoting and developing Butano Forest after it has become a state park. Membership in Butano Forest Associates is open to all who wish to join, on the following basis: Life member, $100.00; contributing, $10.00 per year; active, $2.00.

Your contribution is hereby urgently solicited. (Contributions are deductible from income taxes, if designated specifically for purchase of Butano Forest by the State.) Send your check in care of the Sierra Club.



MAP OF THE BUTANO FOREST REGION

Glacier View Dam, Glacier National Park

A public hearing on the Corps of Engineers' proposals to construct Glacier View Dam on the Flathead River, Montana, which, if built, would cause irreparable damage to the natural features and the wildlife of Glacier National Park, has been announced by the Seattle District Engineer. The hearing is scheduled to be held on May 25, at Kalispell, Montana.

National Park Service representatives attended a preliminary hearing on May 14, 1947, at Kalispell, at which information was first presented on the study of this and alternate dam sites on the Flathead (Canyon Creek and Coram sites). Objections to these three, and any other possible sites on which a dam might be constructed that would adversely affect Glacier National Park, were filed by the Service representatives. Another protest was made this year when it was learned that the Corps of Engineers would include the Glacier View Dam in its forthcoming report. The National Park Service will be represented at the May 25th hearing to record further its opposition to the dam, and to focus attention on the need for presentation to the public and to the Congress of the full facts

on the basis of which the primary public interest can be determined.

The proposal contemplates a dam which would create a fluctuating artificial body of water approximately 30 miles long. Fifteen thousand acres of primitive wilderness, considered by many to be among the important scenic areas of North America, will be flooded if this dam is constructed.

Wildlife, for which there is already a deficiency in winter range, would be drastically affected. It is estimated that the flooding of available winter range for wildlife would mean the loss of 70 per cent of the whitetail deer in the park, 20 per cent of the mule deer, 20 per cent of the elk, and 80 to 90 per cent of the moose. In addition, it would eliminate approximately 70 per cent of the beaver population on the west side of the park.

Conservation and Memorial Fund Established

At the suggestion of a member in a letter to the Secretary, the Directors at their May meeting voted that a Conservation and Memorial Fund be established. Remarkably enough, two contributions to this fund were received before any of the members heard about its existence.

This separate but general fund (contributions to which are tax exempt) is for the purpose of receiving gifts and bequests, and is to be drawn on for conservation work when some unusual need arises that cannot be met out of the normal budget. It is similar to the fund accumulated over the course of many years that made possible the club's successful campaign for the creation of Kings Canyon National Park.

One of the two early contributions was a check for $25 from a member who expressed regret that he had not been able to take a more active part in the conservation program but wished to contribute toward its progress. The second contribution was a check for $100 from a member in Boston. He was alarmed to find, he wrote, that the $50 he had paid for a life membership many years ago was not enough—according to the Secretary's actuarial figures published a few issues back—to cover what it cost the club to keep him on its roll. He hastened, therefore, to correct the situation—even though he feels that he is now too old to enjoy High Trips as he did for so many years, and can only be an inactive member. The club's thanks go to these contributors to the Conservation and Memorial Fund, and will go to those who decide to add their own contributions in the future—to those who anticipate the cost of the conservation battles the club has surely to join in its long life ahead.

Butano and Calaveras Gifts

The Executive Committee has voted that the Sierra Club act as depository for donations toward the acquisition of Butano Forest and the South Grove of Calaveras Big Trees as state parks. A record will be kept of the donations and they will be passed on through proper channels as contributions of Sierra Club members toward these two worthy projects. Contributors should remember *(a)* that gifts should be made soon; *(b)* that the State of California will match each contribution dollar for dollar; *(c)* that contributions are deductible; *(d)* that each contribution should be marked for whichever area the member desires more to see preserved—or *both*.

Place-Names Revision

A revision of *Place Names of the High Sierra*, by President Francis P. Farquhar, is contemplated within the next year or so. The book has been out of print for several years, and there are repeated calls for a book that has been, and will doubtless continue to be, the only definitive work on the names that apply to the High Sierra.

Mr. Farquhar has been keeping a running file on corrections and suggestions that have come in during the nineteen years since publication, and would like to receive further memoranda from readers of the *Bulletin* who have access to data he has not yet seen. They may be sent to the Editorial Board.

Directors Hold Organization Meeting

At the organization meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club, held in San Francisco on May 1, the following officers were elected for 1948-49:

President, Francis P. Farquhar; Vice-President, Lewis F. Clark; Secretary, Richard M. Leonard; Treasurer, Walter L. Huber; fifth member of the Executive Committee, Phil S. Bernays; Honorary President, Joseph N. LeConte; Honorary Vice-Presidents, Horace M. Albright, Newton B. Drury, Randall Henderson, Joel H. Hildebrand, François E. Matthes, Duncan McDuffie, J. Horace McFarland, Frederick Law Olmsted, Marion R. Parsons, Robert G. Sproul, Walter A. Starr, Ray Lyman Wilbur, William H. Wright.

Francis Farquhar, taking the chair, presided over the longest meeting on record—even though some of the sixty items on the agenda were referred to a future meeting of the Executive Committee, it was past 5:40 when the Directors finally left for the Annual Dinner.

It was unanimously agreed that Horace M. Albright should be asked to succeed Duncan McDuffie, who is retiring as the Sierra Club representative on the Board of the National Parks Association.

A resolution of affectionate greetings was sent to Dr. and Mrs. François E. Matthes, with an expression of hope for Dr. Matthes' speedy recovery from his present serious illness.

Chief Conservation Problems

Butano Forest.—Jack Barnard reported to the Board on progress toward acquisition of Butano Forest lands for a state park. Giving great credit to Dorothy Varian for her excellent work as publicity chairman, he told of the recent activities of the Butano Forest Associates and of their hope of raising funds which, matched by the state, will be enough to purchase and dedicate to recreational use at least a part of the redwoods in the Butano region. There was some discussion on the best way of raising funds and on the contribution which the Sierra Club should make. The matter was referred to the Executive Committee with power to act.

Calaveras South Grove.—Both Arthur H. Blake (Chairman of the Conservation Committee) and Hynton Sharman (representing the Mother Lode Chapter) spoke on the Calaveras South Grove, telling of the difficulties which have been encountered in all endeavors to have the fine sugar-pine area there acquired for a state park. One of the principal difficulties is in raising funds for the purchase of the valuable forest lands, now owned by a lumber company and scheduled for cutting.

Mr. Sharman asked for suggestions on how the Mother Lode Chapter could further the Calaveras acquisition. It was pointed out that the formation of the Butano Associates, achieved largely through the efforts of Loma Prieta Chapter members, had been effective in coördinating the efforts of various organizations and individuals having a common interest. The Board thought it most appropriate that members of the Mother Lode Chapter proceed similarly. Good work already done by the Lodi Garden Club suggests that there is plenty of interest in the Calaveras project and that a central organization could gather strength from a number of groups which would otherwise be without means of working together. A motion was passed that the Directors suggest the formation of an organization for the furtherance of the project of acquiring and setting aside as a state park certain parts of the Calaveras South Grove, and that the Sierra Club should be represented in the organization. The Directors voted that the sum of $100 should be made available, at the discretion of the Executive Committee, to further the publicity work incidental to the formation of the organization. It was also moved that further prosecution of the Calaveras program by the Sierra Club be referred to the Conservation Committee with the request that they utilize to the fullest extent the good offices of the Mother Lode Chapter.

Other Conservation Matters

National Park Land Acquisition Bill.—It was explained to the Board that S. 2132

would provide the mechanism (though not the appropriation) for the buying up of private lands within parks, in much the same way as it has been possible to purchase or exchange private holdings within national forests (the special commission for that purpose having spent $69,000,000 in purchases since 1908). The Board voted strong endorsement of S. 2132.

Quetico-Superior Roadless Area.—The Board endorsed the bill which would provide for federal purchase—and return to wilderness status—of private lands within the proposed Quetico-Superior International Peace Memorial Forest, a splendid country of lakes and woods in which present air-supplied commercial development is considered entirely inappropriate.

Anti-Pollution and Fish-and-Game Initiative.—The Board voted to oppose an initiative measure which the Sierra Club had been asked to support. Mr. Colby reported that the bill is too inclusive to be sound, that its severe restrictions are unworkable, and that it also proposes to change the method of selecting the Fish and Game Commission; the Izaak Walton League opposes it, and the Conservation Committee of the Sierra Club had recommended opposition.

Department of Agriculture Conservation Conference.—The Secretary of Agriculture plans to call a conference on conservation matters, somewhat similar to that held last year by the Secretary of the Interior, and has invited Sierra Club participation. The President of the Sierra Club, or his appointed representative, is to attend the conference.

Old Campsites in Wilderness.—A member of the Outing Committee had suggested that old campsites in which "improvements" (boxes nailed in trees, improvised tables and shelves, etc.) had fallen into a state of disrepair, rendering the site unattractive for further camping, should be returned to as natural a state as possible; he urged that the Park and Forest services be requested to consider removal of the unsightly structures. After brief discussion, it was decided that the matter should be referred to the appropriate committee for study and recommendation.

Tioga Road.—Several Sierra Club members deeply interested in the Tuolumne Meadows region have expressed grave concern over the probable effects of completion of the high-standard road to the Meadows, and have urged restudy and modification of plans as proposed by Park Service engineers. Some of the Directors favor adherence to the plans which were developed fifteen years ago (largely in accordance with recommendations by the Sierra Club); others feel that more recent developments may change our approach to the problem, and that further study is desirable. Following considerable discussion, it was decided that the President should appoint a committee to study the matter, to receive comments from members and the public, and to present findings to the Board for the September meeting (which is to be held on the Labor Day week end at Tuolumne Meadows).

San Gorgonio Wild Area. — A special committee appointed to study the San Gorgonio area and to recommend a use pattern consistent with the recently announced revision of boundaries had presented a thorough and careful report. The report was referred to the Conservation and Winter Sports committees for study and recommendation to the Board at the September meeting.

Shand Hut.—A committee appointed to study and recommend on possible sites for a William S. Shand, Jr., Memorial Hut had been unable to find a desirable site which was not in a wilderness area. Leonard made the suggestion that, subject to the approval of the Park Service, of the Shand family, and of the special committee, the Shand gift be applied to rehabilitation of the stone building on Mount Whitney, erected by the Smithsonian Institution in 1909 as an observatory. It was agreed that it would be quite appropriate to make this existing building, now in a state of disrepair, available for shelter.

Mountaineering Policy. — Mr. Robinson spoke briefly on a discussion of the National Park Service climbing policy, and reported that it had been successfully urged that the Park Service require climbers to register with the rangers, rather than mak-

ing a ruling requiring that they obtain permission for specific climbs in California national parks.

This is a reaffirmation of the club's policy in this respect concerning mountaineering on all public lands. It rests on a theory—proved in California's parks—that the overconfident climber's enthusiasm is best curbed by persuasion, and not by fear of prohibition. If permission is not asked for fear that it will not be given, there is no chance to persuade a man to climb with better equipment or on easier routes. If the climber registers and persuasion fails, NPS men will at least know where to look for the victim.

Membership.—The Membership Committee had asked for the views of the Board on its present procedures; Robinson pointed out that the committee is operating as set forth in the By-Laws (and that its decisions are final except for review by the Board of Directors).

New Chapter.—The Board gave its approval to an attempt to organize a San Diego Chapter, provided the required conditions can be met.

Assistant Secretary at Los Angeles.—Mr. Bernays announced that Miss Carney, Assistant Secretary in the Los Angeles office, is resigning after seven years' service. The appointment of a successor was left to the discretion of the President, who will receive suggestions from Mr. Bernays.

Financial Assistance to Harwood Lodge.—It was decided that a request by the Southern California Chapter for assistance in making certain alterations at Harwood Lodge should receive further study by the Executive Committee.

Keller Mutual Water Association.—The management of the Keller Peak Hut was authorized to enter into an agreement with other water users.

Publications.—The project of publishing an Index to the first 50 years of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* was given priority, the Board agreeing that the publication of the Index should be prosecuted as rapidly as possible.

Fiscal Year.—A motion was passed that the fiscal year of the Sierra Club henceforth end on March 31 (instead of December 31), so as to facilitate preparation of reports and to permit adoption of the budget at the May meeting. C.E.M.

Zoning in National Parks: A Significant Resolution

[The following resolution, presented by Bestor Robinson, was passed at the May meeting of the Directors. A full presentation of the importance of this resolution, and the implication of the concept it represents, is to appear in a later number of the *SCB.*]

RESOLVED—

For the purposes of:

a. Prevention of undesirable and unjustifiable use of private land in national parks, and

b. The setting up of reasonable restraints on administrative action through the use of prior public hearings,

The Sierra Club urges the exercise by the Secretary of the Interior of the land-use zoning power delegated to him by the Congress in those national parks in which the States have ceded their regulatory power to the Federal Government.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Yosemite National Park appears to be well suited to the initial application of such power because of its stabilization of land use through long experience, the impact of population pressure upon it, the existence in it of scattered private-land holdings, and the general public acceptance in California of the exercise of land-use zoning power.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior, the Director of the National Park Service, and the Director of Region IV of the National Park Service.

How Good Is a Three-Year-Old Nylon Rope?

Since the near-fatal accident on the Higher Cathedral Spire last summer, where the climbing rope withstood the full shock of the fall, I was concerned with the strength of nylon rope and in particular with the strength of some of the older rope that the Rock-Climbing Section of the Bay Chapter had been using for almost three years. One is naturally reluctant to part with a rope—particularly on a fall—that has cost twenty or twenty-five dollars, and therefore no tests had been run on a nylon that was this old. Accordingly I appropriated one of the section's three-year-old nylon climbing ropes, and enlisted the help of Karl S. Pister, an instructor at the University of California, in testing the elongation and ultimate strength of the sample.

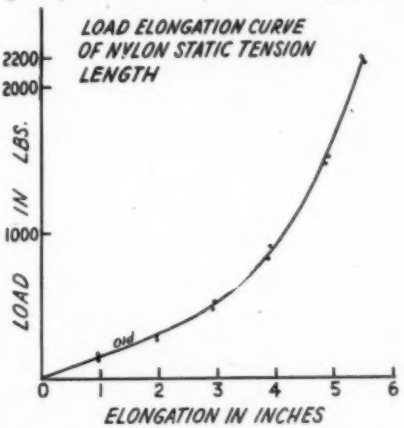
The specimens were prepared in much the same manner as those tested by the Bureau of Standards during the war in order that we might correlate the results with the tests on new rope. The rope tested is a representative one, and has probably had much more wear than any personal rope used for the same length of time. It has been used on an average of once every three weeks for three years.

The tests were performed on a 30,000-pound-capacity Riegle Universal vertical testing machine. The specimens were held in the machine by means of a three-inch-diameter smooth steel pin placed through the eye splices at either end of the rope.

Results

Four specimens were tested. The average breaking strength was 2,100 pounds. One of the specimens tested had a backturn and failed at 1,770 pounds. A backturn is a portion of the rope where the lay has become reversed, to produce an enlarged section about an inch long. This has happened to nearly all of the Section's rope, and is definitely a danger point. (Backturns should be removed, by twisting back the lay, as soon as found—something possible to do only in the early stages.) The most important part of the test was in finding the area under the stress-strain curve, for this is a measure of the ability of the rope to absorb the energy of a fall. It is far more important than the load at failure.

Calculations made from these data indicate that the three-year-old rope without a backturn would hold a fall of a climber weighing up to 170 pounds, whereas with a new rope the climber could weigh up to 250 pounds. This assumes a completely rigid belay; any slipping of the rope will greatly raise the safety factor, and the normal belay does effect a considerable amount of slip.



I believe that the tests indicate that used rope of this age and condition is safe, but caution should be exercised when backturns are found in the rope.

Similar tests run on year-old 5/16-inch rappel rope showed failure at 900 pounds as compared to 1,100 pounds for a new rope. The specimens were taken from a rappel that had failed on a practice climb under the weight of a climber. Fortunately the rope was doubled and tied to the rappel point, so no fall resulted. The rope was over a sharp edge, however, and had been sawed back and forth by a number of previous rappellers. All of this should indicate that on local climbs (1) pads ought to be used to protect rappel ropes, and (2) ropes should be tied double as an added safety factor.

ROBIN A. HANSEN

A Committee Appointment for 1948–49

THE WHOLE CLUB

At the Annual Banquet in May President Francis P. Farquhar announced the appointment of a unique committee – The Committee of the Whole Club – whose duties were described as these:

To sit beside the still waters and watch the beams of sunlight filter to their depths–

To laugh with the dancing cascades that tumble over the granite ledges of the upper basins–

To dream beneath the towering pines, watching white clouds drift across the blue dome above–

To follow with the eye the quick movements of Douglas squirrels or perchance a pine marten–

To smile upon the scarlet, the crimson, and the magenta blooms of penstemon, columbine, and primrose–

To contemplate the unhurried and unharried silent and imperceptible growth of giant sequoias–

And to teach others how to perceive the meaning of these things and translate them into a better way of life–

This is the work of the Sierra Club.